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DE RUEHNR #0311 0291400  
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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4469  
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE  
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 9854  
RUEHDR/AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM 5750  
RUEHDJ/AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI 5073  
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2588  
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 1857  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 2618  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 2552  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RHMFIISS/CJTF HOA  
RUCQSOC/USCINCSOC MACDILL AFB FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 000311

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/29/2018

TAGS: PHUM ASEC PGOV KE

SUBJECT: KENYA ELECTORAL CRISIS: VIOLENCE FLARES IN  
KALENJIN/KIKUYU BORDER TOWNS

REF: 07 NAIROBI 2215

Classified By: Political Counselor Larry Andre, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (SBU) Late on January 24, a fresh round of violence erupted in Nakuru, Naivasha, and Timbora -- all Rift Valley Province towns near the border of Kikuyu-dominated Central Province. The highest death toll was in Nakuru, where clashes between rival armed gangs armed with machetes, spears, bows and arrows killed over 60 people.

¶2. (C) In response to the violence, two army platoons (approximately 60 troops) deployed to Nakuru to support the police on January 25. By January 26, the number had increased to four platoons (approximately 120 troops). The troops patrolled roads, cleared road blocks and protected displaced people. At one point (likely by accident) troops found themselves between two gangs preparing to clash. They were able to disperse the gangs with no shots fired.

¶3. (SBU) In Naivasha town, armed gangs (rumored to be from the Kikuyu Mungiki criminal organization - see reftel) launched attacks against non-Kikuyus. At least 19 people (Luo, Luhya, and Kalenjin) were reportedly burned in their homes or hacked to death.

¶4. (SBU) In Timbora, a town north of Nakuru, police contacts reported that two groups of Kalenjin arsonists torched a settlement of 50 timber houses on the night of January 27. There were other reports that the attacks were more serious. The other reports described armed Kalenjin gangs, some of whom were dressed in police and army uniforms, who launched organized attacks against Timbora residents (presumably Kikuyu). According to the Kenya Red Cross, approximately 10,000 people have been displaced as a result of the Timbora attacks.

¶5. (C) Police contacts reported that ethnic violence has escalated to the point where their forces are becoming overstretched. "We are operating in crisis mode," the contact said. On January 28, former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan was reported in the press to have called for Kenya's armed forces to deploy to suppress the fighting.

¶6. (SBU) There are also credible reports that youth gangs are now manning roadblocks and providing security escorts in places like Kisumu (Western Province), Naivasha, and Nakuru.

¶7. (C) Comment: So far, Kenya's military forces have tried to keep their involvement at a minimal level, but the pressure appears to be increasing for them to play a more active role. Neither the police nor the armed forces are well trained in riot control, and the rules of engagement for both forces are likely to be similar. If the military does begin to assume a greater role in trying to quell the violence, however, we believe that the stronger chain of command will lead to greater discipline and fewer incidents of excessive force.

End Comment.

RANNEBERGER